CHILD WELFARE TRENDS

December 2007

Introduction

The purpose of this document, Missouri Child Welfare Trends, is to provide a realistic portrait of the vital work the Children's Division does everyday with children and families. This document examines child welfare program trends in Missouri and includes measures of achievement as well as measures targeted for improvement.

There **are four main factors** which are driving forces behind this journey toward practice excellence. The first is the **creation of the Children's Division** four years ago, and subsequent reorganization. This allowed a heightened focus on children's issues and resulted in the creation of a specific mission and guiding principles for the Children's Division.

In 2003 the federal government conducted an extensive review of Missouri's child welfare system, called the Children and Family Services Review (CFSR). This review examined and measured the safety, permanency and well being of children and families being served by the child welfare system.   Based on this review, the state developed a **Program Improvement Plan (PIP)** to address every area found not to be in conformity. The PIP has been implemented for the last two years and all indications are that the division will officially be exiting the PIP successfully as the division is on target to meet the agreed upon goals.

In conjunction with PIP activities, the Children's Division is making marked progress in becoming accredited through the **Council on Accreditation (COA).** Accredited agencies are those which meet the best practice standards set forth by the accrediting body. Accreditation requires the division to develop a plan for continuous quality improvement. In other words, a way to measure where we are and a process which uses that information for practice improvement at every level within the organization.

The fourth initiative undertaken by the division to achieve practice excellence is the creation of a **Quality Assurance Unit (QA)** in 2004 **and a Quality Improvement Unit** in 2006. Using the PIP as a roadmap, the QA/QI Units not only assist in analyzing the information produced by the data system, but target specific areas needing improvement and work with regional and frontline staff to develop local action plans.

These broad initiatives overlap, relate to one another, and create an organizational culture in which positive practice change can happen, as illustrated in this diagram.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

MISSION

PIP

Practice Excellence

COA   QA/QI
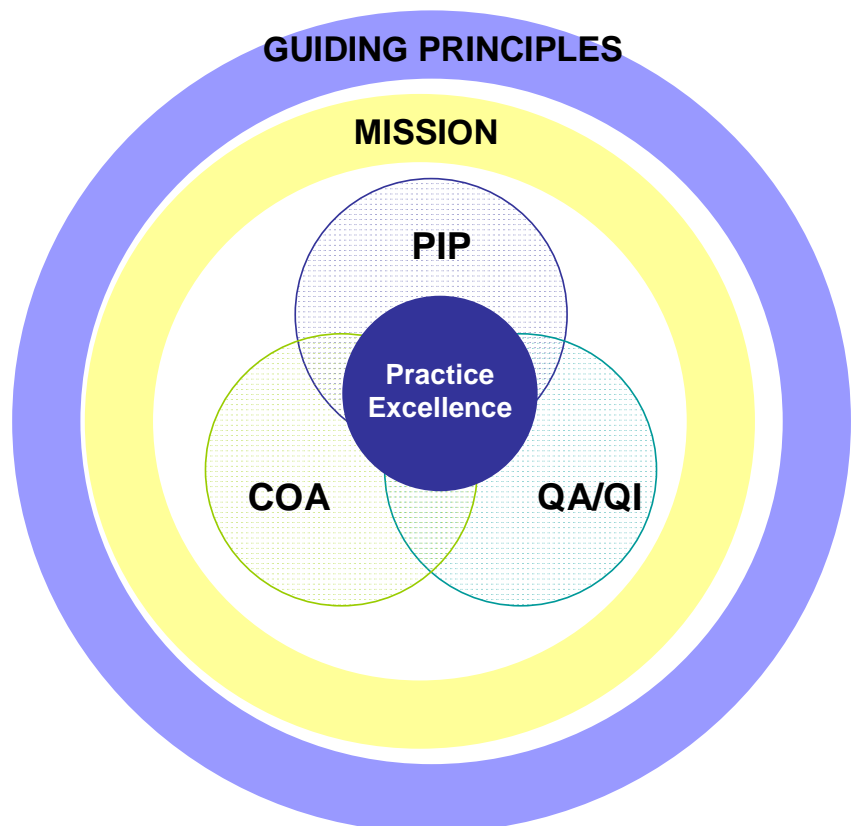
Children's Division Mission and Principles

The division's mission is supported by six guiding principles key to our work with children and families. Improvement plans and processes such as the Program Improvement Plan (PIP), Accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA), and Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement activities are embodied by the division's mission and principles and designed to achieve improved outcomes for children and families.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Children's Division is to partner with families, communities and government to protect children from abuse and neglect and to assure safety, permanency and well being for Missouri's children.

Guiding Principles

Partnership: Families, communities and government share the responsibility to create safe, nurturing environments for families to raise their children. Only through working together can better outcomes be achieved.

Practice: The family is the basic building block of society and is irreplaceable. Building on their strengths, families are empowered to identify and access services that support, preserve and strengthen their functioning.

Prevention: Families are supported through proactive, intentional activities that promote positive child development and prevent abuse and neglect.

Protection: Children have a right to be safe and live free from abuse and neglect.

Permanency: Children are entitled to enduring, nurturing relationships that provide a sense of family, stability and belonging.

Professionalism: Staff are valued, respected and supported throughout their career and in turn provide excellent service that values, respects and supports families.

Intensive In-Home Services (IIS)

Intensive In-home Services (IIS) are intensive, short-term, home based, crisis intervention services offering families the alternative to remain safely together, averting the out-of-home placement of children whenever possible. Missouri's IIS program is considered a national model and has been used by researchers to show the efficacy of this approach.

This chart indicates the number of families who accept and exit the IIS program each year. Of families served since 2002, **over 88% whom have exited this program remained intact**.

Chart showing Number of Families (left axis, 0–3000) and Families Exiting Intact (right axis, 0%–100%) by year 2002–2006. Percentages: 84.8% (2002), 86.9% (2003), 85.9% (2004), 85.9% (2005), 88.2% (2006). Legend: # Families Accepted, # Families Exiting, % Exiting Intact.
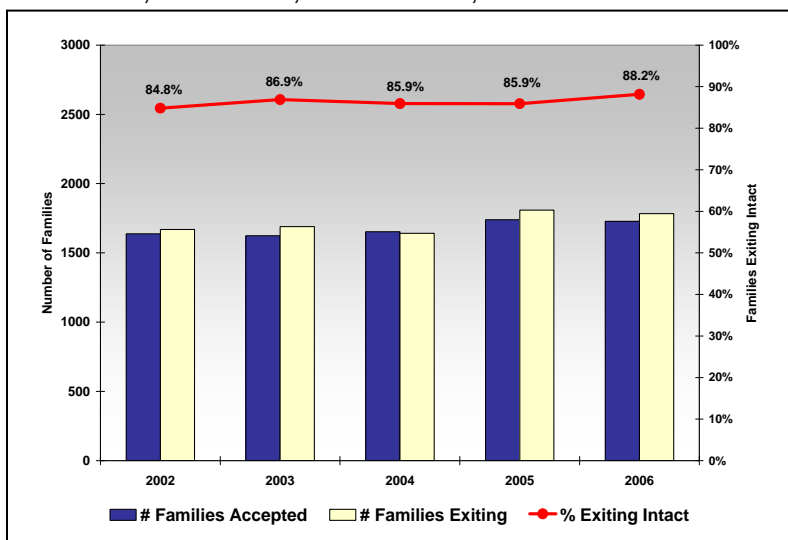
The high percentage of families exiting intact is not the only measure of success enjoyed by the IIS program. This chart indicates a low percentage of families with a substantiated abuse report within three months of exiting the IIS program. **This is an indication that children are safe in their home environments**.

% IIS with Substantiated CA/N 3 Months After Exit
(Outcome Measure 7)

	02 Qtr 1	02 Qtr 2	02 Qtr 3	02 Qtr 4	03 Qtr 1	03 Qtr 2	03 Qtr 3	03 Qtr 4	04 Qtr 1	04 Qtr 2	04 Qtr 3	04 Qtr 4	05 Qtr 1	05 Qtr 2	05 Qtr 3	05 Qtr 4	06 Qtr 1	06 Qtr 2	06 Qtr 3	06 Qtr 4	07 Qtr 1	07 Qtr 2	07 Qtr 3	07 Qtr 4
statewide	0.00	0.49	0.55	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.29	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.27	0.00	0.22	0.23	0.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.24	0.00

(No Data 2006 Qtr 4)
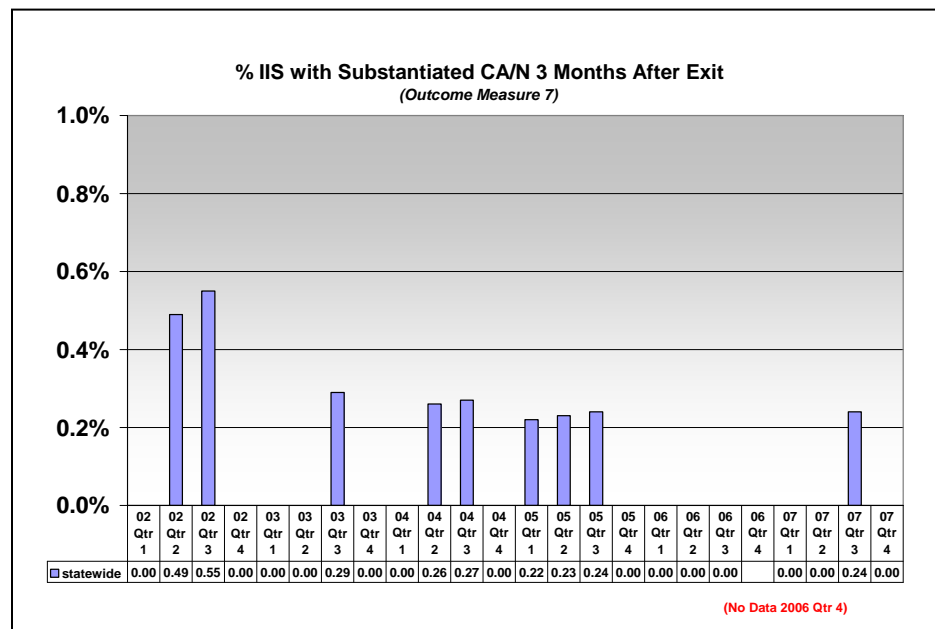
Child Abuse and Neglect Reports

The purpose of an investigation/family assessment is to detect cases of actual or potential abuse or neglect and to help the family and the child. In FY 2006 CD staff responded to 53,080 CA/N reports involving 77,973 children.
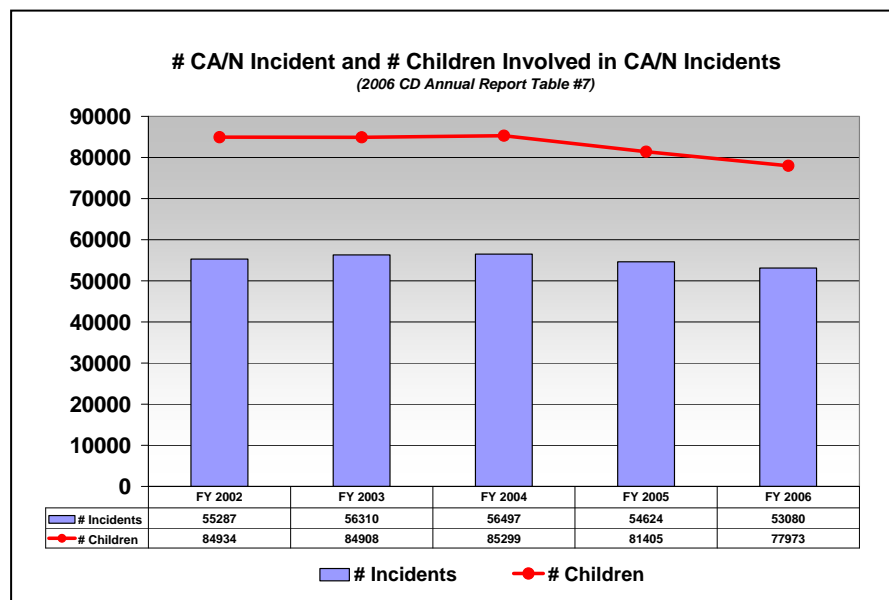
This chart indicates the number of CA/N incidents has **gone down** since 2002. The number of children involved in CA/N incidents is also on the decline. This decline in population served contributes to the decline in the number of children in foster care (see page 5).

 # CA/N Incident and # Children Involved in CA/N Incidents
(2006 CD Annual Report Table #7)

	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006
# Incidents	55287	56310	56497	54624	53080
# Children	84934	84908	85299	81405	77973

■ **# Incidents**   ●— **# Children**

Family-Centered Services (FCS)

Family-Centered Services are provided to families and children in their own homes when during a child abuse or neglect investigation/family assessment the CD children's services worker determines the family needs services to prevent future child abuse or neglect. These services are also provided to families who voluntarily seek help. The primary purpose of Family-Centered Services is to improve and maintain the family unit for the well-being of children.

As this chart shows, the number of active FCS cases has **decreased** over the past five years. This decrease in the number of active FCS cases can be attributed partially to the decrease over time in the number of CA/N incidents (see page 3).

 # Active FCS 2002 - 2005
(FY 2006 Annual Report)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
# Active FCS	25052	22525	21245	20777	19557
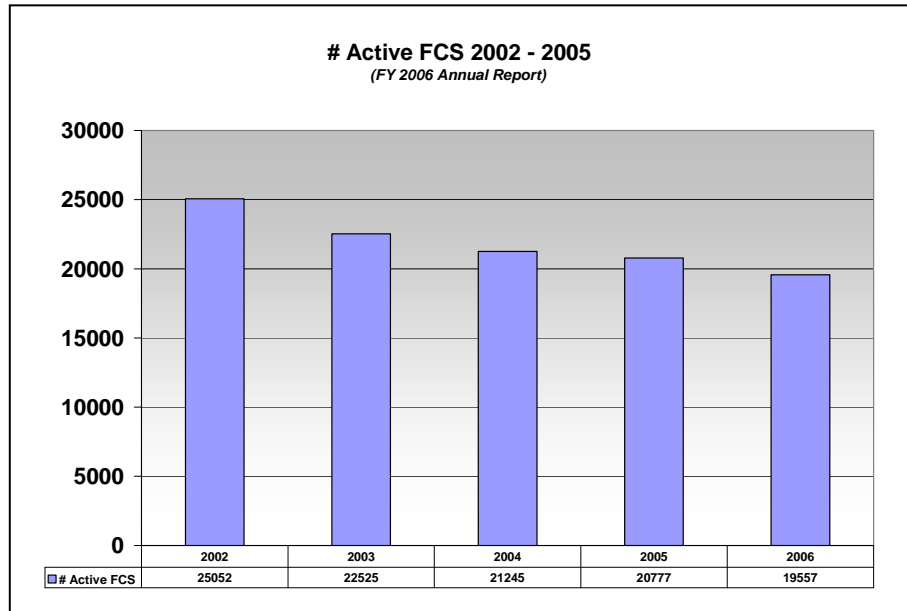
One way to demonstrate services are effectively protecting children is by looking at the % of FCS cases in which there is a substantiated CA/N report.

This chart represents the percent of substantiated child abuse/ neglect reports on children receiving services through the Family-Centered Services program. **CA/N in FCS has decreased steadily** over the last 6 years. This low CA/N rate indicates that caregivers are not subjecting children to further abuse and neglect while receiving FCS services.

% Open FCS w/ Substantiated Report
(Outcome Measure #6)

	02 Qtr 1	02 Qtr 2	02 Qtr 3	02 Qtr 4	03 Qtr 1	03 Qtr 2	03 Qtr 3	03 Qtr 4	04 Qtr 1	04 Qtr 2	04 Qtr 3	04 Qtr 4	05 Qtr 1	05 Qtr 2	05 Qtr 3	05 Qtr 4	06 Qtr 1	06 Qtr 2	06 Qtr 3	06 Qtr 4	07 Qtr 1	07 Qtr 2	07 Qtr 3	07 Qtr 4
statewide	1.72	1.54	1.79	1.64	1.69	1.70	1.77	1.47	1.63	1.50	1.73	1.61	1.46	1.41	1.64	1.48	1.34	1.08	1.10	0.40	1.30	0.97	1.22	0.51
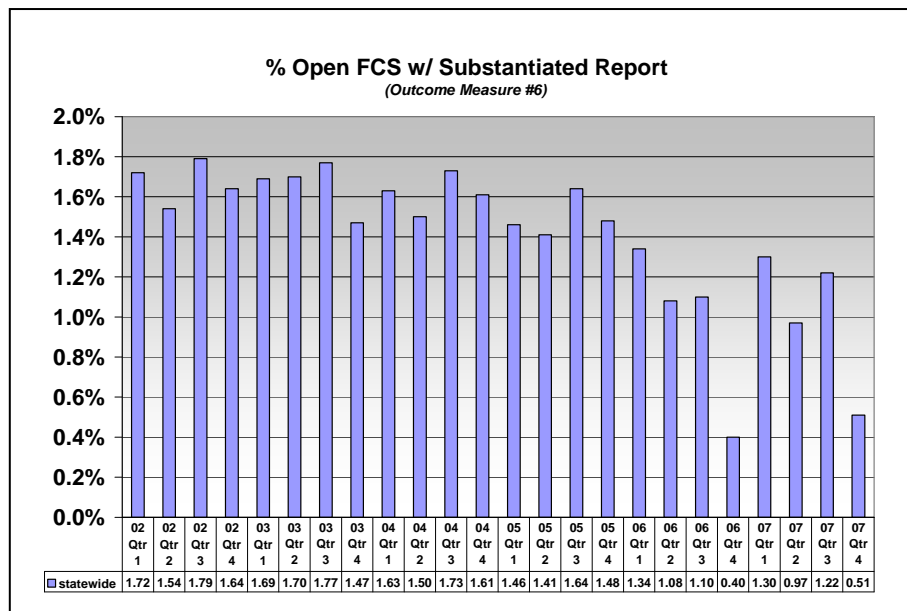
Family-Centered Out-of-Home Services (FCOOHC)

Out-of-Home Care is defined as care provided in licensed foster or approved relative family homes, in licensed residential facilities, or in licensed foster group homes. Children are placed in out-of-home care in situations where caretakers are incapable of providing a child or children with adequate social, emotional, and physical care. Out-of-Home Care is provided to children up to age 18, or up to age 21 in special circumstances.

The number of children in Missouri placed in out-of-home care at any time during the year has **steadily decreased** from a high of 12,521 in May 2002 to 9,656 in July 2007.

The decrease in the number of children in foster care can be attributed to a number of factors (see charts on IIS and CA/N reports on pages 3 and 4). Additionally, the number of children taken into foster care is less than the number exiting every year since 2002.

10 Years Point in Time # of Children in LS1
July 1997 to June 2007
(Highest Population = 12,521 in May 2002)
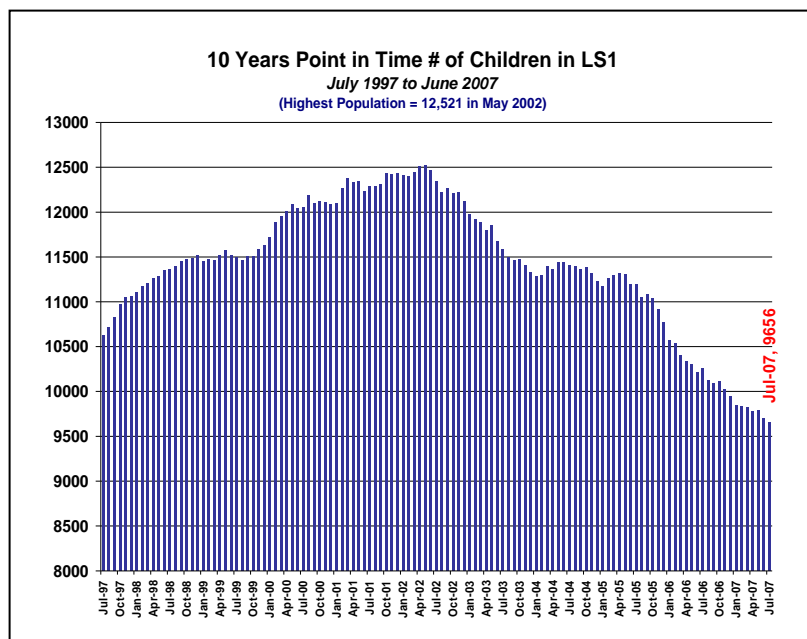
This chart shows that the number of children exiting foster care every year has continually **exceeded** the number entering foster care, contributing a decline in Missouri's foster care population.

 # Children (RE)Entering and Exiting 2002 - 2006
(FY 2006 Annual Report)

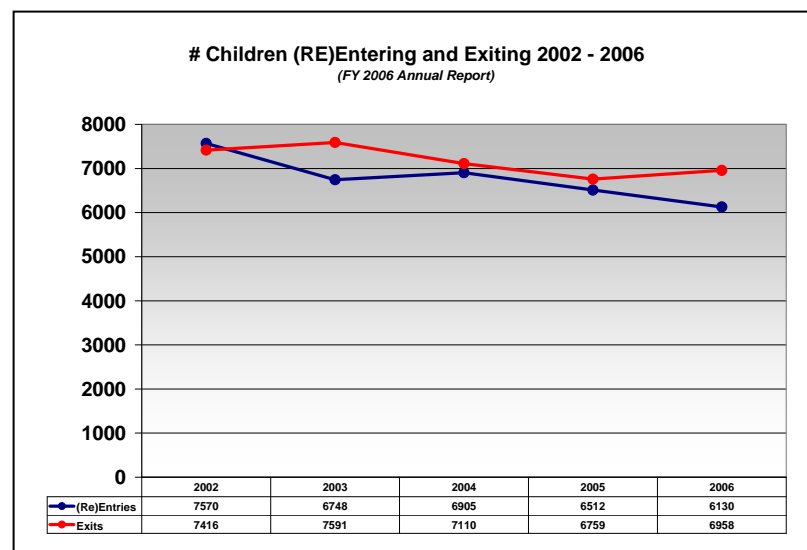|	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
(Re)Entries	7570	6748	6905	6512	6130
Exits	7416	7591	7110	6759	6958

When the decision is made to place a child out of their home, first preference is given to relatives. This chart indicates the percent of children placed in out-of-home care with relatives. The division consistently places almost **one fourth** of all children with relatives.

% Children Placed with Relatives
(Outcome Measure #17)

	02 Qtr 1	02 Qtr 2	02 Qtr 3	02 Qtr 4	03 Qtr 1	03 Qtr 2	03 Qtr 3	03 Qtr 4	04 Qtr 1	04 Qtr 2	04 Qtr 3	04 Qtr 4	05 Qtr 1	05 Qtr 2	05 Qtr 3	05 Qtr 4	06 Qtr 1	06 Qtr 2	06 Qtr 3	06 Qtr 4	07 Qtr 1	07 Qtr 2	07 Qtr 3	07 Qtr 4
statewide	24.7	24.6	24.5	24.2	23.6	23.3	23.3	23.4	23.3	23.1	23.1	23.6	23.7	23.7	24.1	24.2	24.2	24.4	24.6	24.5	24.2	24.5	24.3	23.1
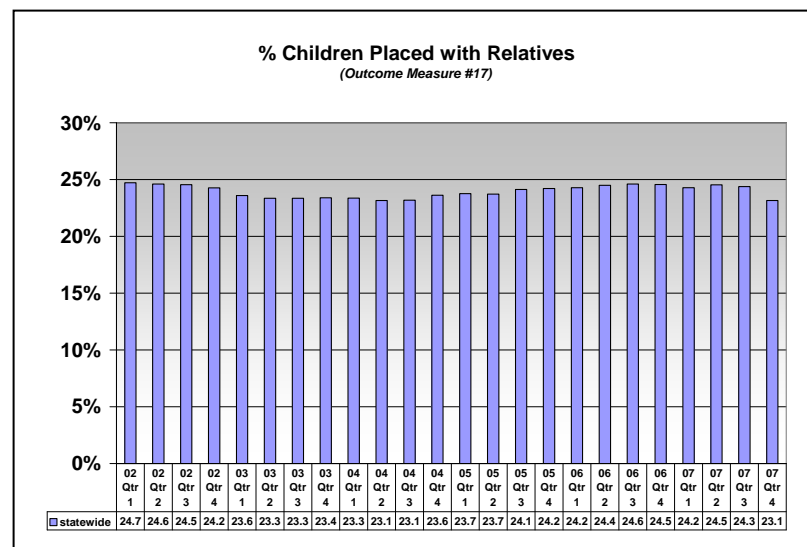
The Legal Guardianship Subsidy Program, authorized by Missouri legislation, Senate Bill 1 was effective August 28, 1999. This subsidy program is funded by state adoption subsidy funds only. **Subsidized guardianship provides legal permanence for children who would otherwise be in foster care**.

This chart indicates the number of children receiving guardianship services continues to **rise** as many relatives who have children placed in their homes are seeking guardianship as an option. This also contributes to the decline in the foster care population.

Point in Time # of Children Receiving Subsidized Guardianship
(Monthly Management Reports June 2002 - June 2007)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
statewide	1202	1664	2212	2654	3033	3331
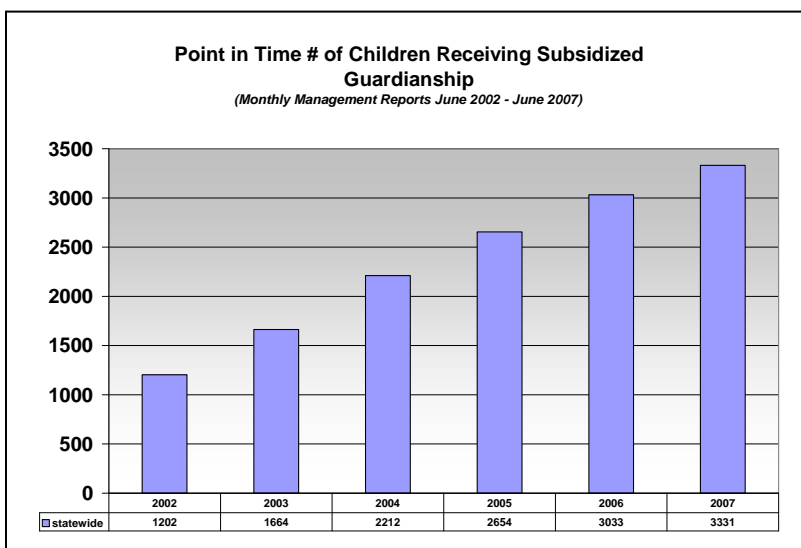
This chart indicates the percent of foster children placed in residential care. **Placement in residential care has steadily decreased** over the past 3 years. Fiscal year 2007 4th Quarter represents the lowest percent of foster children placed in residential care over the past 15 quarters. A lowe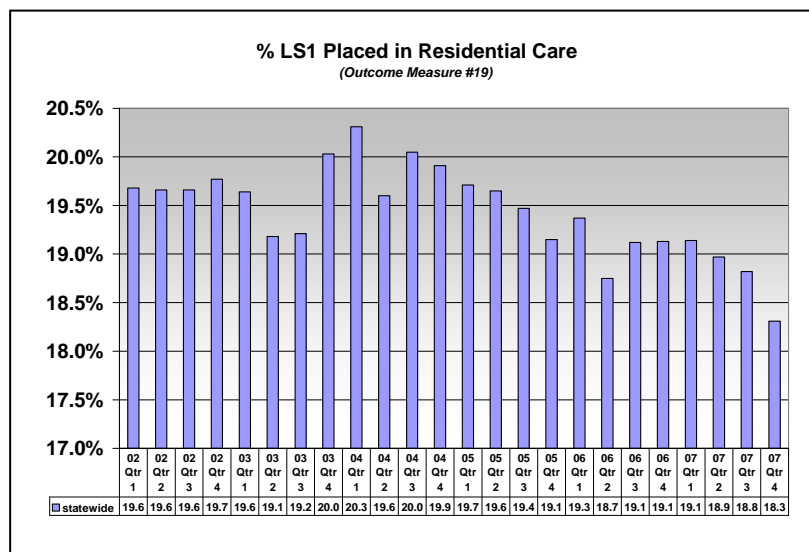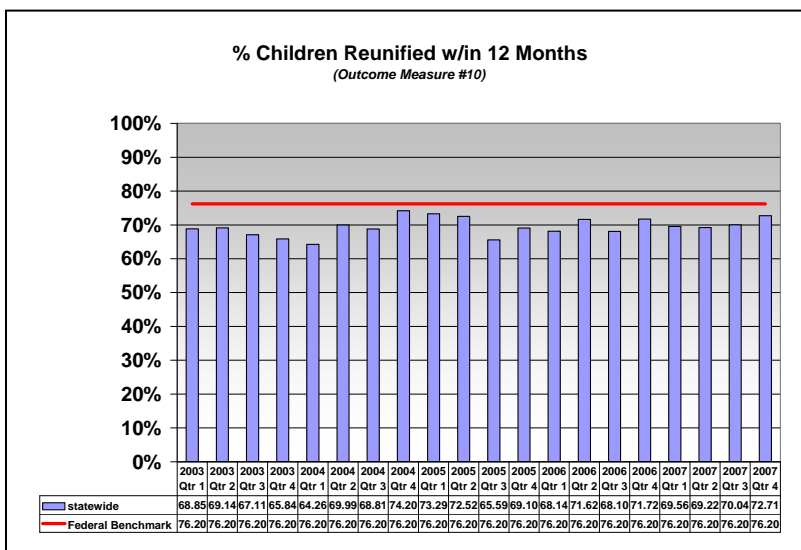r percent of children placed in residential care is an indicator that children are being placed in more family like settings.

% LS1 Placed in Residential Care
(Outcome Measure #19)

	02 Qtr 1	02 Qtr 2	02 Qtr 3	02 Qtr 4	03 Qtr 1	03 Qtr 2	03 Qtr 3	03 Qtr 4	04 Qtr 1	04 Qtr 2	04 Qtr 3	04 Qtr 4	05 Qtr 1	05 Qtr 2	05 Qtr 3	05 Qtr 4	06 Qtr 1	06 Qtr 2	06 Qtr 3	06 Qtr 4	07 Qtr 1	07 Qtr 2	07 Qtr 3	07 Qtr 4
statewide	19.6	19.6	19.6	19.7	19.6	19.1	19.2	20.0	20.3	19.6	20.0	19.9	19.7	19.6	19.4	19.1	19.3	18.7	19.1	19.1	19.1	18.9	18.8	18.3

Over the last 4 years, the number of children who have been reunified timely (within 12 months) has **risen** from 69% to almost 73%. Although still below the federal benchmark, the division has met it's agreed upon PIP goal in this area. Progress on this measure can be contributed to strategies developed in the division's PIP and as a result of passage of HB 1453 which required courts to have timely hearings.

% Children Reunified w/in 12 Months
(Outcome Measure #10)

	2003 Qtr 1	2003 Qtr 2	2003 Qtr 3	2003 Qtr 4	2004 Qtr 1	2004 Qtr 2	2004 Qtr 3	2004 Qtr 4	2005 Qtr 1	2005 Qtr 2	2005 Qtr 3	2005 Qtr 4	2006 Qtr 1	2006 Qtr 2	2006 Qtr 3	2006 Qtr 4	2007 Qtr 1	2007 Qtr 2	2007 Qtr 3	2007 Qtr 4
statewide	68.85	69.14	67.11	65.84	64.26	69.99	68.81	74.20	73.29	72.52	65.59	69.10	68.14	71.62	68.10	71.72	69.56	69.22	70.04	72.71
Federal Benchmark	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20	76.20

The red line and scale on this chart represent the number of protective custody, adjudication, dispositional and permanency hearings held in Child Abuse/Neglect cases. The blue bars represent the percentage of those hearings which were held within the time frames provided for in RSMo. 211.032. **Timely hearings have contributed to more timely permanency for children.**
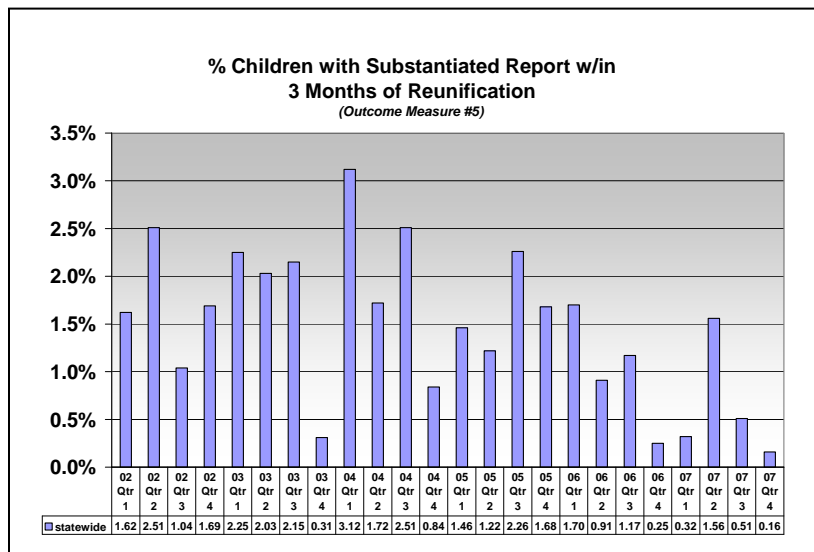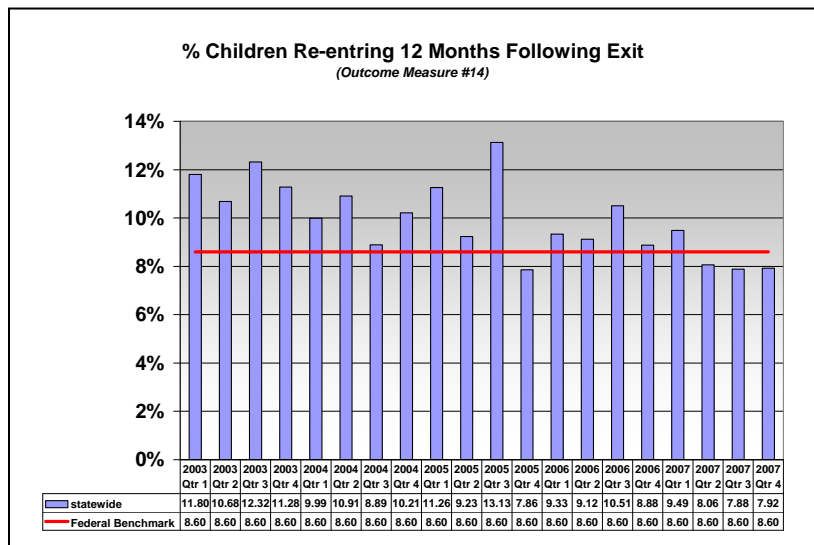
# of Hearings and % Held Timely
(per OSCA Quarterly Hearings Report)

	2006 Qtr 1	2006 Qtr 2	2006 Qtr 3	2006 Qtr 4	2007 Qtr 1	2007 Qtr 2	2007 Qtr 3	2007 Qtr 4
% Timely	92.00%	90.00%	92.00%	94.00%	93.00%	95.00%	96.00%	96.00%
# Hearings total	8793	8845	7911	9213	8923	9273	9049	8967
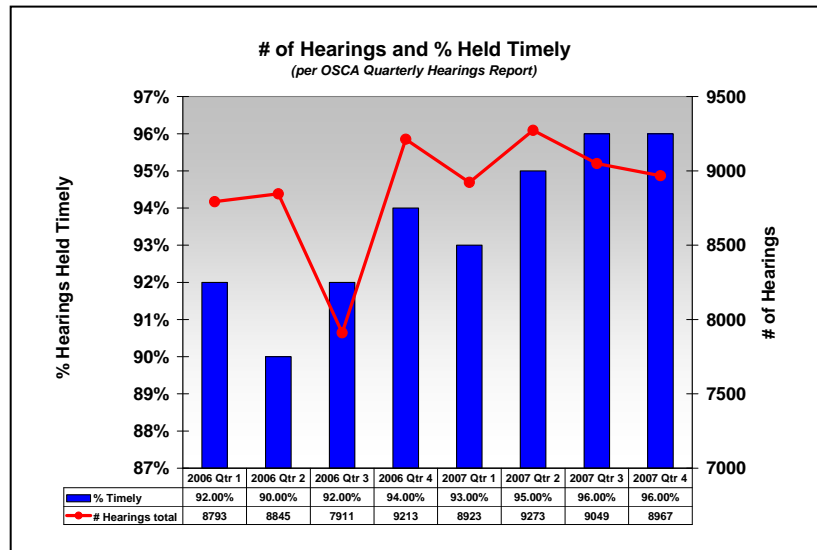
Reunifying children timely is not sufficient unless they are returned to safe environments. This chart shows the percentage of children who had a substantiated report of abuse or neglect within three months of returning home. The **continued decline** in this measure would indicate that children are not only returning home in a more timely manner, but that they are also less likely to experience reabuse upon return home.

% Children with Substantiated Report w/in 3 Months of Reunification
(Outcome Measure #5)

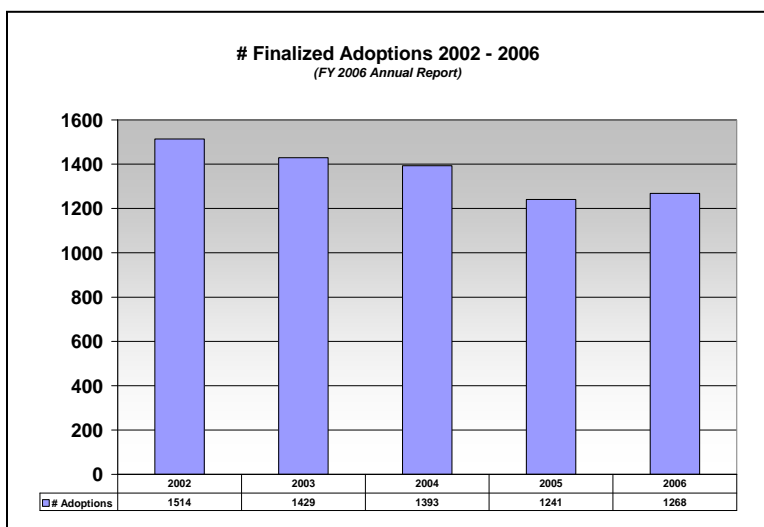|	02 Qtr 1	02 Qtr 2	02 Qtr 3	02 Qtr 4	03 Qtr 1	03 Qtr 2	03 Qtr 3	03 Qtr 4	04 Qtr 1	04 Qtr 2	04 Qtr 3	04 Qtr 4	05 Qtr 1	05 Qtr 2	05 Qtr 3	05 Qtr 4	06 Qtr 1	06 Qtr 2	06 Qtr 3	06 Qtr 4	07 Qtr 1	07 Qtr 2	07 Qtr 3	07 Qtr 4
statewide	1.62	2.51	1.04	1.69	2.25	2.03	2.15	0.31	3.12	1.72	2.51	0.84	1.46	1.22	2.26	1.68	1.70	0.91	1.17	0.25	0.32	1.56	0.51	0.16

An additional indicator of safety of children is the percentage of children who re-enter foster care with 12 months following their exit. This chart shows the division's performance has **improved** and is below the federal benchmark on this measure (lower is better).

% Children Re-entring 12 Months Following Exit
(Outcome Measure #14)

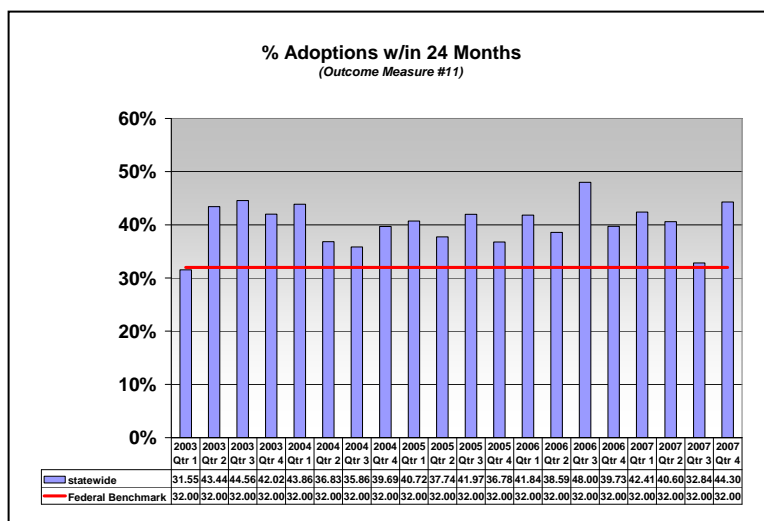|	2003 Qtr 1	2003 Qtr 2	2003 Qtr 3	2003 Qtr 4	2004 Qtr 1	2004 Qtr 2	2004 Qtr 3	2004 Qtr 4	2005 Qtr 1	2005 Qtr 2	2005 Qtr 3	2005 Qtr 4	2006 Qtr 1	2006 Qtr 2	2006 Qtr 3	2006 Qtr 4	2007 Qtr 1	2007 Qtr 2	2007 Qtr 3	2007 Qtr 4
statewide	11.80	10.68	12.32	11.28	9.99	10.91	8.89	10.21	11.26	9.23	13.13	7.86	9.33	9.12	10.51	8.88	9.49	8.06	7.88	7.92
Federal Benchmark	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60

Adoption

A range of services is offered for children and parents involved in the adoption process. These include the evaluation of the child's needs prior to placement, and arrangements for care of the child prior to the child's adoptive placement and to the approval of the adoptive family.

The number of finalized adoptions **decreased** from 2002 to 2005 and has remained almost the same for 2006. This may indicate a plateau trend for adoptions.

 # Finalized Adoptions 2002 - 2006
(FY 2006 Annual Report)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
# Adoptions	1514	1429	1393	1241	1268

For those children who do become adopted, the division **continues** to complete these adoptions in a timely manner (within 24 months). The division's performance exceeds the federal benchmark on this measure.
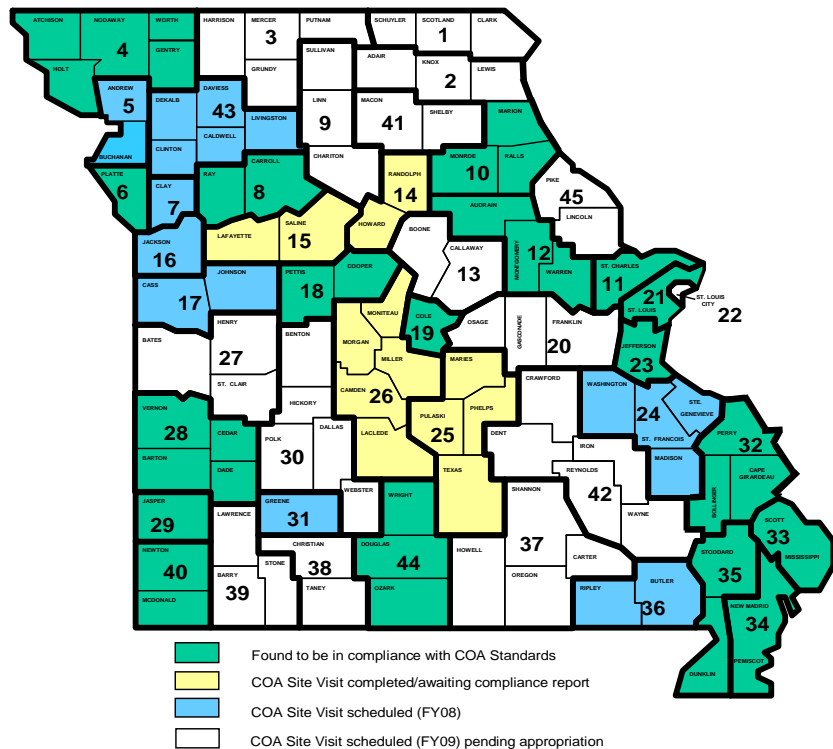
% Adoptions w/in 24 Months
(Outcome Measure #11)

	2003 Qtr 1	2003 Qtr 2	2003 Qtr 3	2003 Qtr 4	2004 Qtr 1	2004 Qtr 2	2004 Qtr 3	2004 Qtr 4	2005 Qtr 1	2005 Qtr 2	2005 Qtr 3	2005 Qtr 4	2006 Qtr 1	2006 Qtr 2	2006 Qtr 3	2006 Qtr 4	2007 Qtr 1	2007 Qtr 2	2007 Qtr 3	2007 Qtr 4
statewide	31.55	43.44	44.56	42.02	43.86	36.83	35.86	39.69	40.72	37.74	41.97	36.78	41.84	38.59	48.00	39.73	42.41	40.60	32.84	44.30
Federal Benchmark	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00

Accreditation

In 2004, the division was legislated through HB 1453 to become accredited through the Council on Accreditation (COA) within five years. It is the division's intent and goal to meet standards of best practice established by COA. In doing so, the division is demonstrating its programs, policies, procedures, and practices are in compliance with the best child welfare practice standards and therefore worthy of receiving accreditation notoriety. As funding permits, the division continues to seek accreditation on a judicial circuit by circuit basis.

In pursuit of best practice standards, staff members have worked to improve casework practice and documentation. Additionally, the division has enhanced many of its policies, provided additional training to its employees and foster parents and increased its private contract to reduce caseload sizes and supervisor to staff ratios.

This map represents the progress being made in the division's accreditation efforts. At the close of 2007, eighteen circuits plus central office and the hotline were found to be in compliance with COA standards. Four circuits have completed their reviews and are awaiting compliance reports. Eight more circuits are scheduled for COA site visits in state FY08 and fifteen circuits are scheduled for COA site visits in state FY09.

Missouri's 45 Judicial Circuits
Accreditation Progress

- Found to be in compliance with COA Standards
- COA Site Visit completed/awaiting compliance report
- COA Site Visit scheduled (FY08)
- COA Site Visit scheduled (FY09) pending appropriation

Note: Central Office and Hotline found in compliance with COA Standards   rev 12/14/07

Summary

The Children's Division is committed to being a learning organization. Further developing our practice and continuously improving the quality of our services plays a critical role in carrying out the division's mission. Through strategic planning, allowing data to inform practice and meeting accreditation standards, the Children's Division is striving to achieve and maintain positive outcomes regarding the safety, permanency and well being needs of Missouri's children and families.